



The Brothers K

By David James Duncan

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The Brothers K By David James Duncan

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK

Once in a great while a writer comes along who can truly capture the drama and passion of the life of a family. David James Duncan, author of the novel *The River Why* and the collection *River Teeth*, is just such a writer. And in *The Brothers K* he tells a story both striking and in its originality and poignant in its universality.

This touching, uplifting novel spans decades of loyalty, anger, regret, and love in the lives of the Chance family. A father whose dreams of glory on a baseball field are shattered by a mill accident. A mother who clings obsessively to religion as a ward against the darkest hour of her past. Four brothers who come of age during the seismic upheavals of the sixties and who each choose their own way to deal with what the world has become. By turns uproariously funny and deeply moving, and beautifully written throughout, *The Brothers K* is one of the finest chronicles of our lives in many years.

Praise for *The Brothers K*

“The pages of *The Brothers K* sparkle.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“Duncan is a wonderfully engaging writer.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“This ambitious book succeeds on almost every level and every page.”—*USA Today*

“Duncan’s prose is a blend of lyrical rhapsody, sassy hyperbole and all-American vernacular.”—*San Francisco Chronicle*

“*The Brothers K* affords the . . . deep pleasures of novels that exhaustively create, and alter, complex worlds. . . . One always senses an enthusiastic and abundantly talented and versatile writer at work.”—*The Washington Post Book World*

“Duncan . . . tells the larger story of an entire popular culture struggling to redefine itself—something he does with the comic excitement and depth of feeling one expects from Tom Robbins.”—*Chicago Tribune*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Duncan took almost 10 years to follow up the publication of his much-praised first novel, *The River Why*, but this massive second effort is well worth the wait. It is a stunning work: a complex tapestry of family tensions, baseball, politics and religion, by turns hilariously funny and agonizingly sad. Highly inventive formally, the novel is mainly narrated by Kincaid Chance, the youngest son in a family of four boys and identical twin girls, the children of Hugh Chance, a discouraged minor-league ballplayer whose once-promising career was curtailed by an industrial accident, and his wife Laura, an increasingly fanatical Seventh-Day Adventist. The plot traces the working-out of the family's fate from the beginning of the Eisenhower years through the traumas of Vietnam. One son becomes an atheist and draft resister; another immerses himself in Eastern religions, while the third, the most genuinely Christian of the children, ends up in Southeast Asia. In spite of the author's obvious affection for the sport, this is not a baseball novel; it is, as Kincaid says, "the story of an eight-way tangle of human beings, only one-eighth of which was a pro ballplayer." The book portrays the extraordinary differences that can exist among siblings--much like the Dostoyevski novel to which *The Brothers K* alludes in more than just title--and how family members can redeem one another in the face of adversity. Long and incident-filled, the narrative appears rather ramshackle in structure until the final pages, when Duncan brings together all of the themes and plot elements in a series of moving climaxes. The book ends with a quiet grace note--a reprise of its first images--to satisfyingly close the narrative circle. Major ad/promo; author tour.

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From Library Journal

If John Irving reimagined *The Brothers Karamazov* as one of his kooky families and Thomas Pynchon did a rewrite, the result might be something close to this long-awaited second novel by the author of *The River Why* (LJ 2/15/83). The brothers are the Chance boys, sons of Papa Toe, a minor league pitcher whose crushed thumb is replaced by a transplanted toe, and his devout Seventh Day Adventist wife. Like Dostoevsky's *Karamazovs*, the Chances speculate on the nature of God, delve into the nuances of what constitutes moral behavior, experience evil, suffer from criminal acts, and, finally, determine that God is love and love redeems. But these are American boys, and although their lives contain some terrible moments, this is essentially a comic novel. Among its many merits, it reflects far better than most fiction the wide variety of Sixties experiences, giving student radical and Vietnam grunt alike their sympathetic due. Baseball provides the central metaphor for this huge hypnotic novel, but although in that sport a "K" indicates a strikeout, here it scores a home run.

- Charles Michaud, *Turner Free Lib., Randolph, Mass.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Another quintessentially American saga from Oregon writer Duncan, moving from the metaphysics of fishing in his first novel (*The River Why*, 1983) to an exploration here of bush-league baseball and the perils of Seventh-Day Adventism during the Vietnam era. The remarkable Chance family consists of six precocious children orbiting at various altitudes and velocities around their equally distinctive parents. Papa Hugh is a sublimely talented pitcher whose career is cut short by an accident in which his thumb is crushed, while Mama Laura zealously wields Adventist tenets to guard herself and her brood against devils and doubts. Four brothers and twin sisters grow up in this pressure-cooker of frustration and blind faith, which becomes more intense as the boys go their separate ways and encounter maternal resistance. Hugh has an operation in which part of his big toe is grafted onto his thumb, prompting the return of his self-respect and a stirring comeback in the minors, but the family situation continues to decay when Vietnam turns one son into a draft-dodger on the lam in Canada and claims another--the gentlest and most religious of the lot--as a foot

soldier, until conflict between the boy's faith and daily reality brings him to assault an officer who ordered the execution of a child prisoner. After he's been shut away in an Army hospital and battered by electroshock treatment, his family reunites to free him, bringing him home just as Hugh begins a rapid, losing battle with cancer. Unfortunately losing focus as it tracks family members around the world to Vietnam and British Columbia as well as rural India, this epic story is still marvelously detailed and poignant, and a garden of delights for baseball lovers. -- *Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Shell:

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students as they are still students or that for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Merely you can be answered for that question above. Every person has different personality and hobby for every single other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't would like do that. You must know how great along with important the book *The Brothers K*. All type of book could you see on many resources. You can look for the internet options or other social media.

Bill Dildy:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for people. The book *The Brothers K* was making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The reserve *The Brothers K* is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to be your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship together with the book *The Brothers K*. You never experience lose out for everything if you read some books.

Joan Ortega:

The guide untitled *The Brothers K* is the e-book that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the guide content that will be shown to an individual. The language that writer use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article author was did a lot of analysis when write the book, hence the information that they share for your requirements is absolutely accurate. You also can get the e-book of *The Brothers K* from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

Nick Gulbranson:

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to your account is *The Brothers K* this book consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented how does the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That's why this book ideal all of you.

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